



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES.

Private Initiative in Furnishing Public Bath Facilities.*—Mr. Macdonald, the well-known London Fabian, would have us believe that every matter for the public good should be undertaken by the municipal government and not by private enterprise. He holds that by just so much as private effort is used to promote the kind of work, which he considers should be the function of the municipality, by just that much is the tone of the city government lowered. For every matter which is removed from the hands of the body politic means that its importance is lessened and that a lower class of citizens will be engaged in the direction of public affairs.

While this is doubtless true to a certain extent, it would yet seem that many lessons may be taught the city fathers by private effort. Taking public baths as an illustration, we have seen in Boston what an enlightened city government can do in the matter of public baths. In Philadelphia the municipality has been doing good work of a certain sort, but has not covered the whole field. The example which I shall discuss shows what may be accomplished by those who are dissatisfied with the existing conditions, and who believe that a practical object-lesson will do more than an attempt by mere argument to force the city councils to accept their ideas.

In years gone by Philadelphia made provision, through private enterprise, for giving the well-to-do opportunities for bathing, but the poor were not thought of. I have a certificate of Hlasko's Institute for Physical Education, issued nearly forty years ago, which states that "Mr. ——— has paid the sum of fifteen dollars, which entitles him to the use of the swimming bath for the first two seasons, or to instructions in gymnastics for six months, or to four months' instruction in dancing, or to two tickets for the junior soirees next season." This shows that in those days skill in the swimming pool was linked with other accomplishments of gentle breeding, and that the bath house was a luxury of the rich.

But it is the masses who are most concerned in the bathing problem. How great that problem is will become evident when we consider that while Philadelphia is known as a city of homes, and while many of these homes have bathing facilities, as many indeed as any other city in this

* Contributed by Mr. Franklin B. Kirkbride, treasurer of Public Baths Association of Philadelphia, being an abstract of an address before the Maryland Conference of Charities and Correction.

country can boast, yet in the older and more closely populated parts, where the people live on crowded streets, in single rooms and in tenements, certainly not one family in twenty has access to a bath.

To meet this need very little has been done. The most important effort is that of the city authorities. It was not until 1885, however, that the first municipal bath house was established on the Delaware river front. To-day the floating river baths have disappeared and in their place we find eight bath houses which have been erected from time to time in different parts of the city. These baths are simply pools, averaging in size about 40 by 60 feet. They are open only during the summer—on five days for men and two for women. As a rule they are not located in the most densely populated portion of our city, and as most of their patrons are the younger men and women who simply desire to get amusement from swimming, they do not reach a very large class—perhaps the class most in need of them. They are, however, doing an enormous amount of good. It is said that more than three million baths were taken in them last summer, but they touch only one corner of the bathing problem.

Again, several charitable organizations have made attempts in the past to meet this need, but they have been only partly successful. Their efforts more often consisted simply in having one or two tubs, a few shower baths or a small pool in connection with their other work, and in some cases the sanitary conditions have been so bad, that the establishments could not be considered unmixed blessings.

In the poorer districts one also finds private bathing establishments, where tubs, Russian, Turkish and shower baths may be obtained, but they are usually in small and poorly kept quarters; the charges are high—so high that the bath is made a luxury—and the poorest class is absolutely cut off from patronizing them.

During the past year or two some of the summer playgrounds have had shower baths in connection with them, and the cooling effect of these baths has added wonderfully to their popularity with the children.

These efforts in various directions have simply been making the field ripe for a concentrated and well-directed attempt to meet the existing need, and the organization of an association for the purpose of supplying the want of bathing facilities in the older and more densely crowded portion of Philadelphia is the culmination of these various efforts.

The organization of the Public Baths Association of Philadelphia in 1895 was the result of the earnest conviction of a young woman that something must be done to relieve the need, of which she had had such practical knowledge in her work among her less fortunate fellows.

As the outcome of her untiring effort, the collection of money was commenced, and a site was secured on one of the worst streets in the so-called slum district of our city.

After baths in other cities had been visited, and the construction of bath houses at home and abroad had been carefully studied, plans were prepared for a building which should be a model in every respect. That building has now been finished and for ten months has been open to the public. It stands on the corner of two narrow streets in the middle of one of our city blocks, and can be approached from three main thoroughfares.

On the first floor is the men's department, where are twenty-six showers and one tub, which are reached after passing through a comfortable waiting room. There is a separate entrance and hallway from which stairs go down to the public wash house in the basement and up to the women's waiting room and baths on the second floor. Here are fourteen showers and three tubs. The superintendent's quarters are also on this floor, and above them in a loft are the tanks which supply the building with water and which have a capacity of 6000 gallons. For five cents—the cost of a glass of beer—the bather secures the use of a dressing room and shower bath, with hot and cold water, a clean towel and a fresh cake of soap, and from the expressions of opinion continually heard, the patrons evidently feel that the nickel they pay is well spent and that they have received something more than its usual value.

In the basement is a public wash house, where for five cents an hour women may bring their washing, using the stationary tubs and drying closets, the ironing boards and irons. In this room is the laundry machinery used to wash the bath house towels. The remainder of the basement is occupied by the lighting, heating and ventilating plant.

The ground, building and equipment have cost \$30,000. The running expenses of the establishment will amount to \$3,600 a year. The fees from bathers during its first year should equal more than half this sum, and from the present outlook the business should eventually become almost, if not quite, self-supporting.

The building was opened to the public in April last and at once became popular. Its patrons are of every sort, from the well-to-do shopkeeper to the shoeless tramp. White and colored, Jew and Gentile, meet here on equal terms and are one and all treated with civility and kindness. They pay for what they get and so are regarded in the light of patrons and in no way as the recipients of charity.

The baths have steadily, if slowly, grown in popularity. While the building has a capacity of more than nine hundred baths a day, and the largest number on any one day so far has been but 541, yet the

end of the first six months saw the 20,000 mark reached and passed. This result has been accomplished by wide advertising, by kind and considerate treatment of every patron, and by showing how much comfort can be secured at the cost of a nickel.

Many thousand cards have been distributed from house to house, on the streets, and in stores; while the co-operation of numerous barbers, grocers, saloon-keepers and charitable organizations has resulted in many more being put in the way of possible bathers.

At first the tubs, especially in the women's department, were much preferred to the shower baths, and as their number was limited and our advertisements stated that they were reserved for the use of the older women only, it soon became a most difficult problem to know where to draw the age line, as *all the women*, young and old, claimed that they were elderly and so should be allowed to use the tubs. It was not until our superintendent suggested that the price of the tubs should be made ten cents, instead of five, that a satisfactory solution was reached. This has proved the strongest and most convincing argument possible, and to-day, while we have a good "tub trade," the shower baths are rapidly increasing in popularity, and when a woman has once tried them she almost invariably says that she will never use the tub again.

It is surprising at times to find in what large numbers our Hebrew citizens patronize the baths, and to see how strict many of them are in observing the provisions of the Mosaic law in this respect. On September 14 only eighteen persons bathed; but two days later, the eve of the Hebrew New Year, more than four hundred Israelites presented themselves to take their New Year's bath, though the day was raw and cold, and many of them clearly did not come from a mere sense of pleasure.

Friday and Saturday are the busiest days. On the former the Hebrew is most in evidence, while on the latter the Gentile is greatly in the majority.

The wash house has been an entirely new departure for this country, although one quite common on the other side of the water. It is, however, slowly increasing in popularity, and more than six hundred persons have used it during the past ten months. Its patrons vary from the men who come on Sundays to wash their only set of underclothing, to the small shopkeepers who send their servants to do the family washing and ironing.

From the start, careful records have been kept of the doings in every department, and many interesting and some curious facts, showing the relation which the weather, the temperature, the day of the week and other factors bear to the patronage of the baths, are

found in the superintendent's record book. The business of the association is also conducted on modern lines. Its books were opened by an expert accountant and are so complete that every detail of the business can be followed with ease and accuracy.

Music and Public Education.—*People's Singing Classes in Boston.** The movement to establish People's Singing Classes in Boston grew from a desire to provide an opportunity for all who wished to learn to read music at sight and to practice chorus singing. The remarkable success of a similar scheme in New York, under the leadership of Mr. Frank Damrosch, made it reasonable to suppose that if a concerted effort were made by the people of Boston the success would be equally great. This hope was justified by the fact that owing to the enthusiasm of the people and their desire to learn to sing, four halls were opened during the first season (1898) in different parts of the city; and the successful work of the members was demonstrated by a concert given in Music Hall.

The support for this movement comes from the people themselves. All the teachers give their services. The only expenses are for the use of the halls, for music, printing and stationery. To cover these expenses each person pays a fee of ten cents for each lesson. The classes are thus entirely self-supporting, and this fact in itself insures the success which comes to every undertaking that is of the people, by the people, and for the people. The age requirement is eighteen years or over for men; sixteen years or over for women. This is the only requirement.

The value to be derived from such study of music as the work in these classes affords is great. The privilege of participating in the rendering of the most beautiful music in the world is made open to all. No previous knowledge of music and no especially good voice is necessary. Whoever is willing to try can learn to take part in chorus singing. One may not be able to sing alone, but the enthusiasm of finding one's self in the midst of a large chorus is such that one cannot help singing with the rest. To take part in the work of these singing classes supplies inspiration not only for the short hour on Sunday afternoon, but also for the toil of all the days of the week.

All inquiries should be addressed to the Executive Committee of the People's Singing Classes, Box 2880, Boston Post Office.

A remarkable growth of interest in the movement is evinced by the greatly increased attendance at the People's Singing Classes. The appreciation shown has astonished Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Higginson, Miss Dexter, Mr. Pickering and Mr. Edmund Billings, who have had

*Contributed by Mr. Charles W. Birtwell, Boston.

the matter in hand. Even Walter Damrosch, the father of the idea, has expressed surprise at the hearty interest manifested in Boston at the opening of only the second season.

The three classes of last year had a membership of about three hundred and fifty. Five classes have been organized this year, whose average total attendance is over eight hundred and fifty.

The rudiments of music are taught the beginners in the classes at the North End Industrial School, North Bennet street; the People's Institute, 1171 Tremont street, and in Dahlgren Memorial Hall, in South Boston. Mr. Gibb, Miss Hoar and Miss Malloy teach these classes, which meet at three o'clock every Sunday afternoon.

The class which is recruited from the three elementary classes meets in Union Hall, 48 Boylston street, at the same hour every week. It has two hundred members.

S. W. Cole's advanced class, which meets in Bumstead Hall, has already five hundred members. It is practicing at present on Rossini's "Stabat Mater." No new members will be received into this class, but members of the next lower class will be promoted to it.

Increase of Crime.—In a recent publication of the Massachusetts Prison Association a strong plea is made for the proposed legislation looking forward to complete state control of penal institutions; that is, of the placing of the county prisons as well as a number of reformatory institutions under the control of a state board. One of the main reasons urged for this change is that it will secure a classification of all the prisoners of the state. An interesting statement is made concerning the magnitude of crime in the State of Massachusetts, and some of the probable results to be expected from a proper classification of the various inmates of county prisons. On these two points we quote the following statements:

"Magnitude of Massachusetts Crime Questions. How serious a matter the growth and size of the crime question is, is shown by the official figures. In 1883 the number of arrests in Massachusetts was 63,803; the number of commitments was 24,125, and the average prison population for the year was 3,893. In 1898 the corresponding figures are 99,336 arrests, 29,796 commitments, and the average prison population for the year 7,654. The cost of police, courts and prisons in 1898 was over \$2,000,000. These figures are startling, and demand the most careful inquiry as to how this increasing volume of crime may be stopped. It can be done in two ways: first, by preventive measures, such treatment of the causes of crime as shall reduce the number of persons who commit offences the first time; and, second, through a classified prison system, by so training those who have committed one

offence that they will abandon their criminal courses and become law-abiding citizens. The large opportunity for the application of this second means of reducing crime in this Commonwealth is shown by the fact that substantially one-half of all the persons committed to the county prisons have served previous sentences in the same institutions. The recognition of this opportunity in recent years has led to a change in the methods of dealing with criminals, especially with beginners in crime, so that emphasis is now put upon their reformation with view to preventing the commission of a second offence. A successful application of these methods will greatly reduce the volume and the cost of crime."

"*Reasons for Classifying Prisoners:—1. As to Length of Sentences.* In 1898 there were 16,252 commitments for non-payment of fines and costs; 8,203 on sentences of less than six months; 1,929 on sentences from six to twelve months; 516 for from one to two years; 135 for from two to three years; and 79 for more than three years. It may fairly be supposed that the length of a prisoner's sentence indicates the heinousness of his offence. It is the estimate placed by the court upon his act. His offence may or may not indicate his real character; he may be better or worse than his deed. But when thousands of cases are considered, it will be found that those who have long sentences are worse than those who have short ones. A system which puts together those who have a sentence of a few weeks and those who are committed for several years must work injury to the former.

"The large number of commitments for the non-payment of fines and costs makes the existing system especially objectionable. More than 16,000 were committed for this cause in 1898. Their offences were trifling—so trifling that the courts did not think a direct sentence to imprisonment was warranted. But inability to pay the fine resulted in imprisonment. Some of them remained but a few days. Nearly 5000 of them paid their fines and were released within a short time after their commitment. If any one of the 16,000 had had a very few dollars of ready cash he would have escaped imprisonment altogether, but lacking this they were all sent to county prisons, which contained every grade of criminals.

"2. *As to Offences.* 1,718 were committed for offences against the person, such as manslaughter, robbery, assault, etc. There were 2,675 commitments for offences against property, including burglary, arson, embezzlement, larceny, receiving stolen goods, fraud, malicious mischief, etc. These 4,393 commitments for offences against the person and against property constituted about 16 per cent of all the commitments. The remaining 84 per cent were for offences against public

order and decency, drunkenness (the principal offence), disturbing the peace, being idle and disorderly, neglect of family, vagrancy, etc.

"3. *As to Criminal Character.* First offences do not prove established criminal purposes. A subsequent offence tends to do so, and failure to refrain from crime after repeated punishments is properly accepted as proof of a deliberate purpose to do evil, or of a weakness of character which makes it impossible to resist temptation. In either case the habitual offender is a dangerous companion, within or without the prison, for the person who is not established in criminal habits or purposes. More than one-half of all who are committed to county prisons have been in the same institutions before, and those committed for the first time are compelled to associate with many habitual offenders of a distinctly criminal type.

"4. *As to Ages.* In 1898 there were 1,212 commitments to the county prisons of persons less than 21 years of age; more than 9,000 of persons between 21 and 30; nearly 9,000 between 31 and 40; more than 5,000 between 41 and 50, and nearly 2,800 above 50. More than 2,500 (about one-fourth) of those below 31 years of age were committed for offences against the person and against property. The remaining three-fourths within those ages were for offences against public order and decency."

English Law for Reform of Drunkards.—A new English law passed at the last session of parliament, authorizing an extension of certain radical measures for the treatment of habitual drunkards, went into effect on the first of January, 1899. In 1888 an act was passed by the English parliament which authorized the Secretary of State for the Home Department to grant licenses to physicians of reputation to establish retreats for inebriates, and power was given local magistrates to commit to these retreats, for a period of one year, such persons who declared their willingness to submit to treatment. This act has worked well. The retreats have been carefully inspected by the home office, but ten years' experience shows that the term of one year is too short to effect a complete change or reformation, and also that although these retreats have increased in number, private enterprise is not wholly adequate to cope with the problem. Under the act of 1888, leaving the establishment of such retreats to private enterprise, practically only persons of means could secure the advantages of treatment. The new act, therefore, authorized county and borough councils to establish and maintain retreats to which persons whose circumstances do not permit their being maintained in a private retreat may be sent, and power is given to judges to commit convicted persons to retreats instead of to penal servitude, and additional powers

are given to the local police magistrates. Persons may be detained for a period of three years, and in cases of persons of means being so committed, the cost of maintaining the inmate can be recovered. Local magistrates may commit for periods not exceeding three years in cases where habitual drunkards have come before them more than three times in a single year.

In connection with this action of the British parliament it is interesting also to note a paragraph on the same subject in Mayor Quincy's last annual address to the city council of Boston, where a commission of inquiry has been established to report on this question. The following paragraph contains some interesting facts that would doubtless hold good for other cities than Boston :

"It seems to me that the problem of so adjusting the penalties for drunkenness, that, on the one hand, this form of misdemeanor will receive sufficient punishment to restrict, as far as practicable, over-indulgence in intoxicating liquor, without, on the other hand, imposing too large a direct financial burden upon the community—through the cost of maintaining an unnecessary number of drunkards in confinement at the public expense, and inflicting a still larger loss upon those dependent upon them for support—is worthy of closer study and more practical investigation than it has received. From a social standpoint, this is one of the most serious questions with which the city has to deal, on account of the very large number of persons who are directly or indirectly affected. It has appeared to me that the number of persons confined in our houses of correction for drunkenness was excessive, and that some way should be found to reduce the expense and loss to the community, without increasing the amount of intemperance. During the year ending January 31, 1898, there were 847 committals to the house of correction at Deer Island on account of drunkenness, amounting to about 75 per cent of the total committals; and on the basis of a pro rata division of the expenses of the institution, the direct cost to the county for the confinement of drunkards for that year amounted to over \$111,000 at this one institution. In addition, it is estimated that about 3,000 persons are committed to our county jail yearly for this offence, besides a considerable number sent to the house of correction at South Boston. In the last three years the committals to Deer Island for drunkenness have increased about 30 per cent. Past experience has shown the intimate relation between changes in the laws affecting the punishment for this offence and the drunkard population of Deer Island, and I believe it to be highly desirable that this important question should be carefully inquired into from the standpoint of the financial, social and moral interests of this great municipal community, with a

view to the recommendation of remedial measures, if such are found practicable. With this object in view I have recently appointed a commission of inquiry, consisting of seven men and women specially qualified to investigate this question carefully and without prejudice. I trust that the report which they will make within the next few months will throw some light upon this important problem, and will lead to amendments to the present laws, if these are found desirable."